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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001338

SIPDIS

FOR S/WCI PROSPER AND SA A/S ROCCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/02/2015

TAGS: [KISL](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: SPEAKING OUT ON GITMO AND DETAINEES

REF: STATE 139288

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Ambassador raised issue of understanding for US detainee operations with Foreign Minister Kadirgamar on August 1, explaining that we wanted our friends to better understand our operations and the rationale for them, and to convey their support to broader constituencies. Kadirgamar noted at the beginning of the conversation that as far as he could see, this issue did not have great visibility in Sri Lanka.

12. (C) Ambassador made points in reftel, adding that Sri Lanka with its long history of ethnic conflict and fighting terrorism was well aware of how difficult such a struggle against an unconventional enemy was. Foreign Minister agreed, commenting that it was difficult for democracies to fight terrorists with their hands tied behind their backs. (Foreign Minister has long been a top target for the Tamil Tigers, and by coincidence that weekend several suspicious individuals had been arrested while apparently surveilling the Minister's heavily fortified residence.)

13. (C) COMMENT: We agree with the Foreign Minister that US detainee operations and alleged abuses, while reported in Sri Lanka media, are not a burning topic here. Sri Lankans are preoccupied with their still-unresolved ethnic conflict. Post will shortly convene a group including PAO to discuss additional opportunities to get our message out.
LUNSTEAD